



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION
PRACTICE ORGANIZATION

February 28, 2008

Honorable Patrick J. Kennedy
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Jim Ramstad
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Kennedy and Ramstad:

I am writing on behalf of the American Psychological Association to express our strong support for House passage of H.R. 1424, the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act. While the Mental Health Parity Act of 1996 was an important milestone for patients and consumers, the APA has urged Congress for more than a decade to close loopholes in the law so that benefits discrimination is finally and completely ended in the private healthcare system.

Much progress has been made toward enactment of parity this year. The Senate passed a strong bill that we support, S. 558, last September, and through your tireless leadership H.R. 1424 has progressed through committee consideration and is ready for floor action. We hope that passage of H.R. 1424 will lead to continued negotiation toward a parity bill that is acceptable to both the Senate and the House of Representatives. With the intense work that has been accomplished in both chambers, Congress has an historic opportunity to enact mental health parity into law this year.

Both the Senate and House mental health parity bills are strong. Both eliminate discrimination against mental health and substance use benefits. Both preserve strong parity and consumer protection laws, and both will extend parity protection to 82 million more people who cannot be protected under state laws. We urge House passage and negotiations now to work out differences with the Senate so that mental health parity will become a reality for the millions of Americans who need this equitable coverage.

Sincerely,

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